



Understanding Students with Physical Disabilities and Other Health Impairments

IDEA Definition

- Orthopedic impairment means a severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by a congenital anomaly, impairments caused by disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis), and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contractures).



Characteristics and Eligibility



Discussion Question

- In what ways do you feel prepared or unprepared to work with students who have a physical disability?



Cerebral Palsy

- A disorder of movement or posture due to damage in the brain (see handout)
 - Spastic
 - Athetoid
 - Ataxic
 - Mixed
 - Other associated conditions: MR and Speech
 - <http://www.ucp.org/>



Spina Bifida

- Malformation of the spinal cord
 - Spina bifida occulta
 - Meningocele
 - Myelomeningocele - most common type



Causes

- Occurs in early pregnancy
- Mothers taking folic acid reduce the risk
- Usually does not affect intelligence
- May cause incontinence or other urinary or bowel problems
- http://www.spinabifidaassociation.org/site/c.liKWL7PLLrF/b.2642297/k.5F7C/SpinaBifida_Association.htm



Other Health Impaired

- Chronic health problems those that have an adverse impact on educational performance
 - Chronic: develops slowly and has long-lasting symptoms
 - Acute: develops quickly with intense symptoms that last a relatively short period of time



Prevalence

- 2003-2004, 452,045 or 0.7% of student population
- Of all students, 10-30% will experience a childhood chronic illness lasting 3 mos. or longer
- More than 200 specific health impairments exist



Epilepsy

- Characterized by seizures (abnormal electrical discharges in the brain)
- Generalized seizures
 - Tonic clonic
 - Petit Mal (Absence)
- Partial seizures
- Myoclonic



Characteristics of Epilepsy

Most have average IQ, but are more likely to have LD
 At risk for ADHD
 Higher levels of depression



Causes

- Insults to the brain
- Prenatal - infections
- Perinatal - birth trauma
- Postnatal - poisoning, stress, fatigue, sleep deprivation



Prevalence

- Up to 10% of all children experience seizures at some point
- 1% of population have epilepsy by the age of 20
- <http://www.epilepsyfoundation.org/>



Asthma

- Most prevalent chronic illness of children and leading cause for school absences
- Prevalence is epidemic - increasing by 72% from 1982 to 1994
 - Approximately 7-10% of the general childhood population
 - More risk with diverse populations



Characteristics

Causes

Triggered by food, exercise, cold air, respiratory infections, environmental allergens (cig. Smoke, dust, mold, gases, chemicals)

Inherited



Group Questions

- Do you believe the number of other health impairments will go down or up in the future. Why?
- How can your personal beliefs shape our interactions with students who have other health impairment?

